
Transportation Committee

HB 2633

Brief Description: Addressing the payment of traffic fines.

Sponsors: Representative Newhouse.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Eliminates the statute of limitations on recovering any monetary penalties assessed for a traffic infraction.
- Requires a person wishing to renew a vehicle license to first pay all monetary penalties assessed for any traffic infractions the person has committed.
- Requires the registered owner of a vehicle to pay all monetary penalties assessed for any traffic infractions the person has committed before the vehicle may be redeemed from impound.

Hearing Date: 2/5/08

Staff: David Munnecke (786-7315).

Background:

Any person operating a motor vehicle on a highway in Washington must have a current and proper vehicle license. In addition to paying the required fee or fees, a person seeking to renew a vehicle license must pay all standing, stopping, and parking violations for the vehicle incurred while the vehicle was registered in the person's name.

A police officer is allowed by statute to take custody of a motor vehicle and have it impounded under the following circumstances:

- if the vehicle's driver is arrested for certain offenses or taken into custody;
- when the officer finds the vehicle unattended upon a highway where the vehicle is an obstruction to traffic or jeopardizes public safety;
- when the vehicle is stolen;

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- when the vehicle is illegally parked;
- upon a determination that a person is operating the vehicle without a valid driver's license; and
- upon a determination that a person does not possess a special endorsement required for the type of motor vehicle operated.

In order to redeem a vehicle which has been impounded, the legal or registered owner must pay the costs of towing and storing the vehicle. In the case of vehicles impounded for driving with an invalid license, any penalties, fines, or forfeitures must also be paid before the vehicle may be redeemed.

Actions upon a judgment or decree of any court must be commenced within 10 years of the accrual of the action.

Summary of Bill:

Any monetary penalties imposed for a traffic infraction are not subject to the 10 year statute of limitations on commencing actions upon a judgment or decree of a court.

A person seeking to renew a vehicle license must first pay all monetary penalties assessed for any traffic infractions the person has committed. This requirement does not apply to a person who has entered into a payment plan for those penalties with the court.

The registered owner of a vehicle must pay all the monetary penalties assessed for any traffic infractions the person has committed before the vehicle may be redeemed from impound. This requirement does not apply to a person who has entered into a payment plan for those penalties with the court.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on 2/3/08.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect July 1, 2008.